

Message Text

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70

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB GR MILI

SUBJ: ATHENAI AIR BASE HUNGER STRIKE

REF ATHENS 3791

1. THE INTERVENTION BY THE MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT, AND HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH THE MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PRODUCED NO CHANGE IN THE SITUATION CONCERNING THE DISMISSAL OF 64 EMPLOYEES OF U.S. FORCES IN THE ATHENS AREA (REFTEL). THE SERVICES OF THE EMPLOYEES CONCERNED WERE TERMINATED ON MAY 30 AS PLANNED AND A SPOKESMAN FOR THE U.S. FORCES HAS INDICATED THAT ADDITIONAL LOSSES OF POSITIONS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY OCCUR AS THE ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY THE U.S. MILITARY FORCES IN GREECE ARE BEING CURTAILED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GREEK GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST.

2. THE 64 GREEK EMPLOYEES DISMISSED ON MAY 30 IN THE INITIAL PHASE OF THIS REDUCTION IN FORCE PROGRAM BEGAN A HUNGER STRIKE THE MORNING OF JUNE 9 OUTSIDE THE GATE OF ATHENAI AIR BASE. THE STRIKE IS OF AN UNSPECIFIED DURATION AND ITS

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ANNOUNCED AIM IS TO SECURE THE REHIRING OF THE

DISMISSED EMPLOYEES BY THE U.S. FORCES OR THEIR PLACEMENT IN OTHER JOBS BY THE GREEK GOVERNMENT. PUBLICITY IN CONNECTION WITH THE HUNGER STRIKE HAS CLAIMED, INCORRECTLY, THAT U.S. CITIZENS HAVE BEEN ILLEGALLY HIRED TO FILL THE VACANCIES CREATED BY THE MAY 30 DISMISSALS.

3. ON JUNE 6 THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE U.S. FORCES EMPLOYEES UNION DECIDED TO LAUNCH A SYMPATHY STRIKE ALSO OF UNSPECIFIED DURATION COMMENCING ON JUNE 12. THE SAME DAY WE UNDERSTAND THE UNION WAS CAUTIONED BY THE MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT THAT SUCH A STRIKE ACTION WHILE ARBITRATION IS IN PROCESS IN CONNECTION WITH UNION WAGE DEMANDS WOULD BE ILLEGAL. IT IS NOT CLEAR AS OF NOW WHETHER THIS STRIKE WILL TAKE PLACE OR HOW EXTENSIVE IT WILL BE IF IT DOES.

4. AS THE HUNGER STRIKE BEGAN, ABOUT 15-20 DISMISSED EMPLOYEES POSITIONED THEMSELVES OUTSIDE THE ATHENAI AIR BASE GATE. THEY ARE NOT BLOCKING TRAFFIC OR ATTEMPTING TO PREVENT ENTRY INTO THE BASE. THEIR PROTEST SIGNS READ : "HUNGER STRIKE;" "WE ARE VICTIMS OF REVENGE FOR THE AMERICAN EMPLOYER;" "WE REQUEST PROTECTION FROM THE PRESIDENT;" "THE EMPLOYEES OF U.S. FORCES REQUEST REEMPLOYMENT." KUBISCH

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